

The 30 Second Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is a clear, brief message or “commercial” about you. It communicates who you are, what you’re looking for and how you can benefit a company or organization. It’s typically about 30 seconds, the time it takes people to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. (The idea behind having an elevator speech is that you are prepared to share this information with anyone, at anytime, even in an elevator.) At a career / job fair, you can use your speech to introduce yourself to employers. It is important to have your speech memorized and practiced. Rehearse your 30 second elevator speech with a friend or in front of a mirror. The important thing is to practice it OUT LOUD. You want it to sound natural. Get comfortable with what you have to say so you can breeze through it when the time comes.

This elevator speech is:

- absolutely not longer than 25 to 30 seconds
- or - in words - approximately 80 to 90 words
- or - in sentences - 8 to 10 sentences

A SAMPLE ELEVATOR SPEECH OUTLINE

These 10 speech topics will help to write a carefully planned and prepared presentation that grabs attention and says a lot in a few words. This format suggestion helps you to avoid creating a sales pitch. Use each idea to write one short powerful sentence.

ABOUT YOU

1. Smile to your counterpart, and open with a statement or question that grabs attention: a hook that prompts your listener to ask questions.
2. Tell who you are: describe you and your degree/strengths.
3. Tell what you do and show enthusiasm.

WHAT DO YOU OFFER

4. Tell what problems you have solved or contributions you have made.
5. Offer a vivid example.
6. Tell why you are interested in your listener.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS

7. Tell what very special service, product or solutions you can offer him or her.
8. What are the advantages of working with you? In what do you differ from other students?

HOW DO YOU DO IT

9. Give a concrete example or tell a short story, show your uniqueness and provide illustrations on how you work.

CALL FOR ACTION

10. What is the most wanted response after your elevator speech? Do you want a business card, a referral or an appointment for a presentation after your elevator speech?

BUSINESS QUESTIONS YOU MAY ASK

These are other points, questions and business subjects you could ask yourself:

- Who is your target?
- How large is your market volume?
- How do you make profits?
- What are the background, major milestones and achievements of your team?
- Who are your competitors, how do they solve a problem? What is your strength and advantage compared to them? What is your Unique Selling Proposition? Are there special patents or technology? Do you have a special approach in client management? And so on.

CHECKLIST FOR FINETUNING

STEP 1: First write down all what comes up in your mind.

STEP 2: Then cut the jargon and details. Make strong short and powerful sentences. Eliminate unnecessary words.

STEP 3: Connect the phrases to each other. Your elevator address has to flow natural and smoothly. Don't rush.

STEP 4: Memorize key points and practice.

STEP 5: Have you really answered the key question of your listener: What's In It For Me?

STEP 6: Create different versions for different business situations of your elevator speech. Note them on professional business cards.

What information might you include in your elevator speech for a career fair? Consider sharing your name, year in school, major skills and career goals. Include personal information only if it is relevant to the work for which you are applying. Here are some examples to help you get started developing your 30 second elevator speech.

Examples:

Hi, my name is Julia Williams and I am a final year Environmental Science major. I'm looking for a position that will allow me to use my research and analysis skills. Over the past few years, I've been strengthening these skills through my work with a local watershed council on conservation strategies to support water quality and habitats. Eventually, I'd like to develop education programs on water conservation awareness. I read that your organisation is involved in water quality projects. Can you tell me how someone with my experience may fit into your organisation?

Nice to meet you, I'm Kyle Belle. I'm currently a final year student, studying Computer Science. I hope to become a computer programmer when I graduate. I've had a couple of internships where I worked on several program applications with a project team. I enjoy developing computer applications for simple business solutions. The position you have listed on CaribbeanJobs seems like it would be a perfect fit for someone with my skills. I'd like to hear more about the type of project teams in your organisation.

Hi, my name is Brad. I am currently a first year student attending UWI Cave Hill majoring in Accounting and Finance. This summer I did an internship with Invest Barbados and I hope to work at a Credit Union when I return to school this semester. Ever since I can remember I have always had an interest in numbers and I feel certain that this is something I want to do in my future career. Next summer I'm hoping to get another internship learning more about how the international financial market operates. I also want a career working with people since I enjoy assisting others with their finances. Can you tell me more about entry level opportunities in finance which are available at your company?

Here's how it could be adapted for a job-seeker:

- Who am I? (introduce yourself) -- No change
- What business am I in? -- What field or industry am I in?
- What group of people do I service? (be specific -- do you have a niche?) -- What position am I in? In what capacity do I serve?
- What is my USP (Unique Selling Proposition)? What makes me different from the competition? -- No change
- What benefits do my customers derive from my services? -- What benefits can employers derive from skills, based on my proven accomplishments?

Similarly, in a job-hunting situation, the listener's tacit question may be "Why should I (or any employer) hire you?"